REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendments and following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-6 are pending; Claims 1, 2 and 4 are amended; and no claims are newly added or canceled herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 2 and 4 were objected to; Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,003,647 to Kawamura; and Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawamura and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,314,801 B1 to Reggiardo and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,803,869 to Jamzadeh.

With regard to the objection to Claims 2 and 4, the noted informalities have been addressed by the present amendment. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

With regard to the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103, those rejections are respectfully traversed.

The applied art does not teach or suggest a lock-up clutch which has a clutch piston, and a frictional material disposed at a surface of the clutch piston facing a front cover wherein the clutch piston is in contact with the front cover due to a predetermined pressing force when the hydraulic pressure difference is substantially zero, as claimed in Claim 1.

Instead, Kawamura discloses a torque converter 1 that includes a front cover on the input side. A lock-up clutch 7 includes a piston 22 and an elastic coupling mechanism 40 for elastically coupling the piston 22 to the turbine 4. A plate spring 35 is located at the outer circumference of the piston 22. The plate spring 35 has a cone shape with its outer circumference being positioned towards the engine side of the torque converter 1 in the free

state and its inner circumference being positioned towards the transmission side of the torque converter 1.

In preferred embodiments of Kawamura, the outer circumference of the plate spring 35 is slightly separated from the outside surface of the piston 22. The outer circumference of the plate spring 35 is adjacent to the friction surface 37 of the front cover 2. The friction facing 36 is composed of an annular paper material which is fixedly coupled by an adhesive to the outer side surface on the outer circumference of the plate spring 35. Thus, the friction facing 36 is coupled to the side of the plate spring 35 that faces towards the engine side of the torque converter 1. The friction facing 36 presses against the friction surface 37 of the front cover 2 by the plate spring 35 when the engagement of the lockup clutch 7 is released and when the piston 22 is closest to the turbine 4.

Therefore, according to the teachings of Kawamura, there is an increase in the cost of the apparatus due to an increase in the number of components, such as the plate spring and the durability of the plate spring. Furthermore, because the frictional material of Kawamura is disposed at the plate spring, the frictional material may be removed from the plate spring if the plate spring is bent.

In contrast, independent Claim 1 recites that the frictional material is disposed at a surface of the clutch piston facing the front cover and the clutch piston is in contact with the front cover due to a predetermined pressing force when the hydraulic pressure difference is substantially zero. Thus, as Kawamura does not disclose or suggest the features discussed above with respect to independent Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Kawamura. It is therefore respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

As for the remaining rejection of Claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kawamura in view of Reggiardo and further in view of Jamzadeh, Claim 6 depends

from Claim 1. As discussed above, Kawamura fails to disclose or suggest all the features of independent Claim 1. Because neither Reggiardo nor Jamzadeh is relied upon to provide the features identified as deficient in Kawamura, Reggiardo and Jamzadeh are not substantially addressed herewith.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-6 is patentably distinguishing over the applied art. For at least the reasons discussed above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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